

Random Encounters

Spider, Spider, Burning Bright ...

By Ramon Arjona



The Sword of Selvetarm

Son of the Spider Queen, Champion of Lolth, the Spider That Waits -- these are the titles of the drow god that is known as Selvetarm. A vassal of Lolth, he serves her without question despite the deep hatred he harbors for her and for every other living being. As the patron of drow warriors, he inspires the dark elf military to hone their fighting skills and to seek out bloodshed.

Selvetarm's favored weapon is a heavy mace named *Venommace*. However, his warriors specialize in many forms of combat, including the two-handed fighting styles favored by the drow. To empower these warriors and further the cause of Lolth against her many enemies, Selvetarm gave his sword to a powerful dark elf warrior. For decades, the foul blade has been lost in the Underdark. It is only a matter of time, however, before the blade is discovered. If Lolth's enemies uncover it, they will perhaps have opportunity to destroy it. If, however, the followers of Selvetarm find the sword first, they will have a powerful weapon to use in their endless battles against the foes of the Queen of the Demonweb pits.

In the hands of a nondrow evil character, the *Sword of Selvetarm* functions as a +2 *longsword*. If a nonevil character attempts to wield the Sword, it bestows 2 negative levels on her. Although these negative levels never result in actual level loss, they remain as long as the sword is in the wielder's possession and cannot be overcome in any way (including *restoration* spells). The negative levels disappear when the sword leaves the wearer's possession.

In the hands of an evil drow, however, the true power of the sword emerges.

- It functions as a +5 *elf bane unholy vorpal longsword*.
- The wielder gains a +5 enhancement bonus to Dexterity.
- The wielder gains an additional +10 enhancement bonus on Hide checks.
- The wielder can rage as though a 16th-level barbarian.
- The wielder can cast at will as if a 16th-level caster: *spider climb, web*.
- Once a day, the wielder can cast as if a 16th-level caster: *fire spider, phantom steed*.
- Once a month, the wielder can summon a *yochlol*, which will allow the user to commune with Lolth or Selvetarm on their home plane, the Demonweb.

The sword is intelligent (Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 19, Ego 25) and lawful evil. It does not like to be kept from battle, and it will try to propel its owner into any fight. The sword cannot speak, except to call out the name of Selvetarm in the heat of combat, but it can communicate telepathically with its owner. It will attempt to dominate any nondrow who wields it, forcing them to support the cause of Selvetarm and Lolth.

To destroy the sword, it must be forced to deal damage to either Lolth or Selvetarm while located in the Demonweb.

Introducing the Sword of Selvetarm to Your Campaign

- While trekking through an unexplored part of the Underdark, the PCs stumble on the skeleton of a drow warrior, clutching a stainless sword in his hand. The sword attempts to dominate the first PC that picks it up and forces the PC to return it to the soldiers of Selvetarm located in Menzoberranzan. Alternatively, the sword might attempt to persuade the PC to take up the cause of Selvetarm and slay a powerful enemy of the drow that lurks nearby.
- The PCs are charged with finding the sword and destroying it. However, Naradna the drider also wants the sword so that she can forward her campaign of genocide against the drow. Rather than confront the players, she offers a compromise: if the PCs work with her to find the sword, she will first use it to eradicate the drow before helping the PCs uncover the means of destroying the evil blade. Naradna knows the secret to the sword's destruction and is willing to share it with the PCs when she feels the time is right -- indeed, she hopes the PCs will take the blade to the Demonweb and turn it on Lolth herself, hopefully destroying the Spider Queen in the process and erasing what will by then be, she hopes, the last trace of the drow.
- The drow have recovered the sword and plan to launch a bloody campaign against the surface elves. The PCs may not want to confront the dark elf host directly, but perhaps they can infiltrate the dark elf ranks and steal the sword from them, thus depriving the drow of their primary advantage.

Bringing the Parts Together

As mentioned in the section on Naradna, she wishes to find the sword. Perhaps Derrin, on Naradna's behalf, presents the group of PCs with a mission: Find the whereabouts of the sword, and the PCs will be well rewarded. If you wish to be sneaky about it, you may want to set up

another item that was also lost with the sword that the PCs are to seek out. Since Naradna would presumably know that if you find one, you find the other, this more inoffensive item could cause the PCs to bite the bait.

Coming in Part 4 of *Spider, Spider, Burning Bright* ...

Find the Courtyard of Spiders and see what dangers lurk there.

[Return to Main Page](#)

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